

VZCZCXRO1306
OO RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0442/01 0801326
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 211326Z MAR 07
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6545
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000442

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [UN](#) [SU](#) [CD](#)
SUBJECT: UN PREVIEWS ELIASSON/SALIM VISIT TO KHARTOUM

Classified By: DCM R. Powers, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) UN Director of Political Affairs Abidoun Bashua told Poloffs on March 20 that both the international community and the Darfur rebel movements have unrealistic expectations about the political process. UN Envoy Jan Eliasson and AU Envoy Salim Ahmed Salim, who are scheduled to arrive in Khartoum on March 22, believe that negotiations between the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) non-signatories and the Sudanese government can be concluded by June 30. By contrast, the rebels believe they "have all the time in the world" and will not enter productive negotiations until the international community sends them a more unified message.

USG Role

¶2. (C) Bashua suggested several ways that the USG could play a constructive role. First, he said that the international community could help to focus Eliasson and Salim's efforts by asking them tough questions on the UN/AU political initiative, while still supporting the UN/AU lead. He said that U.S. discussions with Eliasson and Salim could also normalize expectations, stating for example that peace negotiations may have to include three or four different rebel groups, which may be incapable of reuniting in a single movement, and that there were no "quick fixes" to the Darfur crisis. He said that forcing a timeline would cause "another Abuja" that could worsen the situation. Highlighting the importance of diligent preparatory work, he said the international community should press Eliasson and Salim to fulfill their commitment to sustained engagement with political forces on the ground, including more frequent and longer visits to Sudan.

Sanctioning Rebels

¶3. (C) International sanctions against rebel leaders--or the threat thereof--who refuse to negotiate would make them more "flexible," said Bashua. He posited a deadline in late April or early May for the non-signatories to commence peace negotiations with the Government or face sanctions. Emphasizing, however, that sanctions targeting rebel groups would need to be done through the UN Security Council and not unilaterally, Bashua also asked that the rumored U.S. sanctioning of Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim be delayed until after Eliasson visits Chad at the end of March. He admitted that a decision may need to be made that JEM is "too rigid" to include in the peace process but that it was important that Eliasson have the opportunity

to assess the situation.

Eliasson, Salim to Sudan

14. (C) According to Bashua, the focus of Eliasson and Salim's upcoming trip to Sudan will be on three groups: IDP and civil society representatives, opposition political party and tribal leaders, and the non-signatories. Eliasson will travel to Ndjamena from Khartoum to meet other rebel groups so that by early April the envoys will have met with all of the key stakeholders. (Note: Salim may not travel with Eliasson to Chad because of many non-signatories' lingering resentment toward him based on his association with the DPA. End note.) The next step would concentrate on the non-signatories' priorities and issues, an agenda for negotiations, and the selection of a venue for new talks. Despite some disagreements between UN and AU staff at the working level, Bashua emphasized that Salim was critical to the success of the UN/AU effort because of his experience in the DPA. "He provides context, history--an intimate knowledge of the concerns from Abuja," said Bashua, noting that Salim can prevent the UN/AU from re-hashing arguments from 2005 and 2006.

Comment

15. (C) The UN/AU team lacks adequate staff to bring the non-signatories to productive negotiations, and according to several UN contacts, Eliasson and Salim are not sufficiently engaged on the ground to make progress. However, the UN/AU initiative is the only effort that can channel international

KHARTOUM 00000442 002 OF 002

efforts to advance the peace process, prevent the dilution of momentum, and avoid "forum shopping" by the various rebel groups. The USG should cooperate with our international partners to press Eliasson and Salim to take a more active role and identify concrete methods of U.S. logistical support for the UN/AU team. End comment.
HUME